

HOUSE RESOLUTION No. ____

Introduced by: Crawford

A HOUSE RESOLUTION to honor African-Americans for their sacrifices on behalf of the United States of America.

Whereas, The United States of America was birthed in the intense heat of revolutionary fire to create a nation where all men would be considered to have been created equal and to be endowed by their creator with the inalienable right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness; and

Whereas, African slaves and freed slaves fought, shed their blood and died in pursuit of the objective of freedom, justice and equality during the War of Independence, yet were not free; and

Whereas, African slaves and freed slaves fought, shed their blood and died during the War of 1812 and significantly contributed to this nation's victory at the Battle of New Orleans pre-serving in its youth, the United States effort to create a nation based on truth, justice and equality; and yet were not free;



Whereas, African slaves and freed slaves continued to provide consistent and persistent loyal support to the evolution of this democracy, in spite of the 1846 decision by the United States Supreme Court in *Dred Scott v. _____* that they were not citizens and were so inferior they had no rights the white man was bound to respect and were, therefore, not free; and;

Whereas, In an eloquent Fourth of July oration Frederick Douglass on July 4, 1852 posed the question:

“What to the American slave is your Fourth of July? I answer, a day that reveals to him, more than any other day in the year, the gross injustice and cruelty to which he is the constant victim. To him your celebration is a sham. Your boasted liberty an unholy license; your national greatness, swelling vanity; your sounds of rejoicing empty and heartless; your denunciation of tyrants, brass-fronted impudence; your shouts of liberty and equality, hollow mockery; your prayers and hymns, your sermons and thanksgiving, with all your religious parade and solemnity, are to him, mere bombast, fraud, deception, impiety and hypocrisy—a thin veil to cover crimes which would disgrace a nation of savages. You invite to your shores fugitives of oppression from abroad, honor them with banquets, greet them with ovations, cheer them and pour out your money to them like water;

But to fugitives from your own land you advertise, hunt, arrest, shoot and kill. You glory in your refinement and universal education; yet you maintain a system as barbarous and dreadful as ever-stained the character of a nation—a system begun in avarice, supported in pride and perpetuated in cruelty; and

Whereas, African slaves and freed slaves fought, shed their blood and died in the Civil War to validate the notion that a nation divided against itself could not stand. They were among the many fallen warriors who heard on the battlefield of Gettysburg the immortal words:

“Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to



the proposition that all men are created equal. Yet Sgt. William Walker of Company A, South Carolina Volunteers, was shot to death by a firing squad on February 29, 1864 for exercising his right to demand equal pay with white soldiers for equally facing Confederate bullets, equally shedding blood and equally dying; and these brave soldiers did not get their 40 acres and a mule; and even after emancipation were still not free.

Whereas, In spite of the 1896 Plessy V. Ferguson decision by the United States Supreme Court which constitutionally enshrined the doctrine of “separate but equal,” descendants of African slaves and freed slaves fought, shed their blood and died in World War I and returned home to the greatest period of lynching in the history of this nation and were still not free to enjoy the blessings of liberty and equal protection of the law; and

Whereas, In 1940 descendants of African slaves and freed slaves while ready, willing and able to join the national lend-lease effort to produce the materials necessary to assist nations throughout the world as the resisted the axis forces of oppression were denied the opportunity until A. Phillip Randolph threatened to organize a march on Washington unless President Franklin Delano Roosevelt opened the doors of opportunity in the defense industry by integrating the work force.

They then fought, shed their blood and died as America entered World War II. In the face of overt discrimination and racism the Golden Thirteen, the Tuskegee Airmen and many others demonstrated their bravery, competence and loyalty to a nation which on their return home in coffins did not even allow them to be buried in most cemeteries in this land, so they were not free; and

Whereas, In 1950 descendants of African slaves and freed slaves fought, shed their blood and died on the Korean Peninsula to resist communist aggression only to return home to the continuing doctrine of “separate but equal” that prohibited their use of G.I. benefits to enroll at most land grant colleges or universities or purchase homes in the most of the



neighborhoods they had shed their blood to defend; and

Whereas, The descendants of African slaves and freed slaves in disproportionate numbers fought, shed their blood and died in Viet Nam and as they returned home remained the last hired and the first fired and were still not free; and

Whereas, Descendants of African slaves and freed slaves fought, shed their blood and died in Operation Desert Storm only to return home to an all-out assault on affirmative action and equal opportunity and became victims to a “war on drugs” that resulted in an unprecedented level of incarceration for inner-city youth and were still not free.

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives of the
General Assembly of the State of Indiana:

SECTION 1. That the new millennium demands and requires new paradigms creating new solutions to the continuing legacy of the “peculiar institution of slavery;” Peculiar solutions such as reparations is the only effective solution to the continuing problem of racism.

